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T H E

H O U S E of P E E R E S S E S :

O R,

F E M A L E O R A T O R Y.

[ P R I C E H A L F A C R O W N . ]



By virtue of an Order of the HOUSE of PEERESSES,  
I do appoint G. KEARSLY of Fleet-street, LONDON,  
to Print and Publish these Debates.

C \* \* \* \* R S, LADY PRESIDENT.





T H E  
HOUSE of PEERESSES:  
O R,  
FEMALE ORATORY.

CONTAINING  
The Debates of several PEERESSES on the BISHOP of LANDAFF'S

**B I L L**

For the more effectual Discouragement of the Crime of

**A D U L T E R Y.**

P R I N C I P A L   S P E A K E R S,

Duchefs of G——n, Countefs Dowager of Hu——n, Lady Cr——n, Countefs of D——th, Duchefs Dowager of B——d,		Lady G——r, Countefs of N——t, Duchefs of L——, Lady P——, Countefs Dowager of H——n, &c.
---	--	--

P R E S I D E N T,

A\*\*\*\*A BA\*\*\*\*ss C\*\*\*\*S, late MA\*\*\*\*\*ss of C\*\*\*\*\*N.

I will rather trust a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself: then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect.

SHAKESPEARE'S Merry Wives of Windsor.

L O N D O N:

Printed for G. KEARSLY, Fleet-street.

M D C C L X X I X.







To the LADIES of GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND.

*WHEREAS* we the Wives and Dowagers of English Peers have thought fit and convenient to call a General Assembly, and in consequence of such proceeding, have on the first day of our Session effectually reversed, annulled, and rendered of none effect the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of L——'s Bill for the prevention of Adultery, Be it known and certified unto all Women by these presents, that in case of any indirect or covert opposition made by the Male-Estates of this realm, such females as shall be declared capable to serve the High Court of Parl——t now assembled, are expected, in obedience to orders issued out for that purpose, forthwith to repair to the respective destinations appointed for rendezvous, and after receiving proper instructions, the said females are commanded, on pain of such forfeiture as the authority of a court martial shall inflict, to take, burn, or in any otherwise destroy such of the enemies garrisons or other places of defence, as shall impede the progress of the said forces. And that the justice of our cause, its importance to the nation in general, and chiefly to the Female Sex, may admit of no controversy, We have, by virtue of an order from our most honorable house, constituted and appointed GEORGE KEARSLY to print these our Resolutions and Debates.

C——S, LADY PRESIDENT.



# PRINCIPAL SPEAKERS.

## P R E S I D E N T,

A—a D'A—y B—s C—rs, late M—s of C—n.

Countess Dowager of H—g—n.	Lady N—.
Countess of D—y.	Duchess of L—.
Countess Dowager of Hu—n.	Countess of S—.
Lady C—n.	Lady A—rs.
Countess D—h.	Dowager Countess of Ha—g—n.
Duchess of D—re.	Lady T—d.
Countess of A—n.	Lady L—n.
Countess of C—ke.	Lady F—th.
Duchess of B—d.	Duchess of A—le.
Lady G—r.	Her R—l H—fs the D—fs
Dowager Lady St—e.	of G—r.
Duchess of G—n.	Lady P—f—t.
The Hon. Mrs. N—.	Lady E—x.

## PROTESTING LADIES.

M—d—n.	L—b—n.
B—f—t.	M—ch—r.
D—th.	P—y.
D—sh—re.	R—nd.
H—tf—d.	Re—d.
Le—r.	Sp—r.

## E R R A T U M :

Page 7, line 18, *for* Lady President, *read* Lady P—l—t.





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K—g,	Q—n,	P—e of W—,
Lord C—r,	Duke of R—d,	Lady C—r—n,
At— G—l,	Sir l—s L —r,	Lady St—e,
S—r G—l,	Sir S—n F—g,	Lady L—nf—gh,
Earl of Ef—m,	Mr. — W—e,	T—p—m B—ck,
Sir John F —k,	Earl of T—l,	Earl of Ch—d,
Earl Nu—t,	Dr. P—e,	Sir W—m de G—y,
Lord Al—n P—y,	Bp of P—h,	Sir L—e D—s,
Mr. Mac P—n,	Sir Hugh P—r,	Lord Ir—m, &c. &c. &c.

The Whole consists of upwards of One Hundred.

☞ For an Account of this Pamphlet, which has run through Twelve Editions in a few Weeks, the Reader is referred to the Monthly and Critical Reviews for last June.

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# THE FEMALE ORATORS.

---

IN pursuance to a general consultation held on the --- of -----, 1779, at Lady -----'s Rooms, for the purpose of calling together the Peereffes of this Realm in urgent cases of necessity, summonses were issued out on the day following to every actual espoused wife, or dowager of the Peers of E--gl--d, commanding, and authorizing the reasons of their attendance on the --- day of March, 1779, for the joint defence of their natural and *acquired* privileges. In opposition to this unprecedented mode of government, the L--ds and C-m--ns, with the advice of his -----, in Parliament assembled, unanimously passed a Bill, strictly enjoining all such of his -----'s officers as should at that period be engaged in the duties of preserving decorum and regularity in those honorable houses of assembly, to prevent, to the utmost of their abilities, and on pain of forfeiture of their emoluments, any precipitate or violent attack that might be made by the P--ff--s of this island, with intention to appropriate such houses to the purpose of unconstitutional, and treasonable debate. Secret emissaries were commissioned

B



missioned to sound the intentions of these right honorable advocates for non-obedience, and at the same time, to throw out hints of the repugnance they must expect from the *male* guardians of their *legal* freedom. This procedure was considered as a stroke of the soundest policy ; for said the noble Lord, who proposed the plan, “ It  
 “ will effectually convince them how fruitless an attempt of this  
 “ kind must prove in the end, and by that means save, if not the  
 “ lives, at least the persons of many of our sex ; and secondarily,  
 “ the world will speak of this female insurrection, merely as a  
 “ merry humor of our wives, not as aiming at the very *eyes* and  
 “ *noses* of their husbands.”

A deliberate enemy will not only gather sufficient force before he make an attack, but will be cautious to have so maturely weighed the efficacy of his counsels, that a slight rebuff shall not at once subvert the purpose of his machinations. Had the right honorable Ladies been deaf to the cautions afforded them from the opposite party, the grand object they had in view, must in all probability have fallen to the ground. The strong entrenchments they would have had to encounter at Saint St----n's, the determined courage of veteran troops against an undisciplined corps, are all arguments that make against any shew of success in the female army. The more prudent dowagers, who had ever invariably proceeded on a sure basis, were well aware of this, and by dint of most eloquent reasoning, induced the younger, and more daring of the *Congress*, to renounce all intentions of acting thus openly. Each seemed of opinion that a violent resistance in words was highly laudable, but any farther declaration of their purposes, detrimental to the infant-dawn of the glorious cause in view. All the hopes, and all the fears arising from the prospect they had faintly got sight of, were canvassed, and sifted in their morning rides, their evening





evening parties, and their midnight meetings. Ranelagh, the Pantheon, no longer murmured with the resonant buz of amorous parties, whispered appointments, and tea-table assignations. The grand cause, the public welfare, the essence of female happiness, were now the subjects for discussion, and the operations to be considered for their support, constituted the theme of universal harangue. Unanimity did not appear to prevail in the choice of a senate-house. All considered an exclusion from the two H--- of P-----t as indubitably resolved by the *male*-contents; and as many other edifices equally adequate to the purpose, and more publicly convenient for the resort of individuals, were at command, it was *nem con.* agreed that they should lay aside all thoughts of an immediate hostile nature. The great consideration was now to appoint the particular spot, which should be honored with so respectable a body of senatresses; and here an interesting debate took place. Each Lady was anxious for the rendezvous she for secret reasons gave preference to, and exercised the most abundant eloquence in favor of its superior advantages. Lady President, and Lady E---x were glowingly warm in defence of their respective *endroits* of appointment, and had actually made choice of seconds, in consequence of a virulent stile of language introduced by the latter, when they were equally put to silence by a considerable majority declaring in favor of A---ck's. The summonses, thus generally distributed amongst the disaffected members of the league, were therefore expressive of the place of destination, which, on proper notice previously given, was new modelled, and suitably fashioned for the senatorial solemnities in agitation. Great were the preparations for the occasion, and impatient the noble personages to display their powers of oratory, upon whatever motion the Lady President should introduce. A--- Lady C---s, late M---- of C-----, was, without a dissenting voice, promoted to the exercise of that  
very



very honorable office, being judged superior in merit to any dow---r of the assembly, and more than equal in her experimental efforts for the preservation of female prerogative, to Lady G----r, or the retired Lady L-----.

On the --- day of March, in obedience to the mandatory dictates, to which they had jointly sworn fidelity, about half past one, the order of precedence was read, and the ceremony being adjusted without altercation, notice was given of the Lady President's approach. Obeisance became a willing tribute to her Ladyship's authoritative claim, and was acknowledged her indisputable due from every party, the Duchesses of A....., and A....., only excepted. Those zealous assertors of their own superiority remained seated. Her Ladyship was accompanied to *the house* by the C..... Dowager of H.....n, and the Ladies C.....n, and F.....th. The female attendants, deputed to the offices of enforcing all forms, and regulations, necessary to the preservation of good order, were careful that proper solemnity should be observed, and paid those honors to Lady C....., which were considered as annexed to the Presidency. The right noble Peerefs, after a pause of some minutes, graciously smiled on the assembly, and receiving a paper from the hand of the honorable Mrs. N....., addressed their Ladyships to the following purport:

\* THE LADY PRESIDENT.

“ *Most noble and excellent Ladies,*

“ The many favorable circumstances, which have hitherto be-  
 “ fallen me, joined to the unanimous sollicitations I have severally  
 “ expe-

\* It may, perhaps, be wondered, how Lady C---- could with propriety be qualified to hold a seat in this important assembly, being neither the wife or dowager of a P--r. We answer, by virtue of the English Peerage she is intitled to in her own right.



“ experienced from this right honorable assembly, induce me to  
 “ hope that I shall not in future give you cause to entertain the  
 “ most distant wish of recalling me from an office I think it my  
 “ highest happiness to discharge. Fortune, in general desirous to  
 “ be in good terms with our sex, has of late been more than usu-  
 “ ally beneficent to myself. It will be needless to enumerate in  
 “ what particulars. You know them, my Ladies, and the world  
 “ knows them : it cannot be otherwise, as I have never shewn the  
 “ least anxiety for their concealment. *No more of this.* I feel  
 “ myself more than ordinarily bold in the presence of so many friends  
 “ to our welfare, and look back with considerable pleasure on the many  
 “ covert interviews we have held for the great purpose of forming  
 “ a general assembly. Indefatigable diligence has at length  
 “ brought it to pass. We have reached the goal, amidst a variety  
 “ of difficulties, the fruitless barriers to our courage. Husbands,  
 “ fathers, brothers, proved ineffectual obstacles in our way. Their  
 “ mangled carcases (forgive the expression) are everlasting tri-  
 “ umphs to our praise. Thus far advanced, I am convinced your  
 “ Ladyships ambition is awakened to a true sense of your situa-  
 “ tion. The summit of power is yet to be attained, and firmness  
 “ only can accomplish it. To desist, when the plain lies inviting-  
 “ ly before us, and renounce a prize, which more than amply re-  
 “ pays the expence of the acquisition, shews a futility of judgment,  
 “ and a passive irresolution, incompetent with the tenets you have  
 “ hitherto professed. Relying, therefore, on your Ladyships per-  
 “ severance, I shall beg leave to call your attention on this first day  
 “ of our session to a circumstance, the enormity of which will suf-  
 “ ficiently plead in defence of the resolutions this house has sub-  
 “ mitted to. The paper I hold contains no less than an attack on  
 “ woman in general. Tired and distressed at the ill success they



“ have experienced from rebel Man, the L--ds of the upper house  
 “ are exercising an unmerited and savage vengeance on the weaker  
 “ sex, and meanly endeavour to *bind* the affections of their espoused  
 “ partners, after having stooped to the servile office of soliciting  
 “ their alliance on any terms. An honorable P----te (Heaven  
 “ blefs him for the wise undertaking!) has suffered himself to be  
 “ drawn into the snare, and though he has not the least interested  
 “ concern in any such matter as his bill treats of, is made a Quix-  
 “ ote for the prevention of other people's.---Your Ladyships well  
 “ know, that amongst a body of Nobility, and those not the most  
 “ infallible, some individuals must, according to the course of  
 “ things, be honored with the sign of --- ----- . To stop the  
 “ growth of so natural a produce, is equally injurious with the  
 “ fines imposed on such as forward the culture. Both these  
 “ threats are issued out against us, and forbode immediate execu-  
 “ tion, if proper means are not considered for their annihilation.  
 “ For this purpose, therefore, my Ladies, we are assembled; and  
 “ lest any one of your Ladyships should suspect me of condemning  
 “ a motion, innocent in itself, I beg leave to support the senti-  
 “ ments I have adopted by referring to the authority of the  
 “ Bill.

A B J I L,



A

**B I L L,**

INTITLED

An Act for the more effectual Discouragement  
of the Crime of Adultery.

**W**HEREAS applications to Parliament for  
Divorces, in cases of Adultery, have of late  
become very frequent:

And whereas the preventing of the person, on account of whose adultery such divorce shall be obtained, from being married to the party with whom such adultery shall have been committed, or to any other person for a certain and limited time, may tend to the discouragement of a crime so destructive to the religion and morals of a people, and so pernicious to the peace and good order of society; for effecting the same,

May it therefore please Your MAJESTY

That it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the  
King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice  
and



and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that, from and after the end of the present session of Parliament, whenever any application shall be made to Parliament for relief, in the case of adultery, and in consequence of such application, an act of Parliament shall pass for the dissolution of the marriage between the person so applying and the person complained of as having committed adultery, it shall not be lawful for the person, on account of whose adultery such marriage shall be dissolved, at or after such dissolution, to marry, or contract marriage with the person who shall be named in such act as the person that has committed adultery with the party complained of.

**And be it further enacted** by the authority aforesaid, that it shall not be lawful for the person, on account of whose adultery such marriage shall be so dissolved, to marry, or contract marriage with any person or persons whatsoever, till after the expiration of twelve Calendar months, to be computed from the last day of the session in which such act shall pass.

**And be it hereby declared and enacted** by the authority aforesaid, that, if any person, on account of whose adultery such marriage shall be so dissolved, shall, at any  
time



time marry, or contract marriage with the party named in such act to have committed adultery with the person complained of; or if such person shall, within twelve Calendar months from the time of passing such act, marry, or contract marriage with any other person whatever, such marriage, or contract of marriage, shall be deemed unlawful, and absolutely null and void, to all intents and purposes whatsoever.

**And be it further enacted** by the authority aforesaid, that no marriage, or contract of marriage, shall hereafter be dissolved in the cause of adultery, unless, in the bill exhibited for that purpose, there be a clause or particular words inserted to declare, that it shall not be lawful for the person, on account of whose adultery such marriage shall be so dissolved, to marry, or contract marriage, after such dissolution, with the person named in such bill as the person who has committed adultery with the party complained of; or to marry, or contract marriage, with any person whatsoever, till after the expiration of twelve Calendar months, to be computed from the last day of the session in which such act shall pass; and that no bill for dissolving such marriage shall hereafter be received in either House of Parliament, unless such clause or words be first inserted or contained therein.



## L A D Y P R E S I D E N T.

“ I forbear making any immediate animadversions on the merits or deficiencies of the matter in debate, and only counsel your Ladyships to pay a proper respect to your own rights, exclusive of any interest that may accrue to your husbands.”

## L A D Y D . . . Y.

Lady D....y commended the zeal with which my Lady President pleaded in defence of female privileges, and declared herself critically of an opinion with the noble peers in point of encouraging the propagation of ..... Her Ladyship mentioned in terms of peculiar sensibility the many satisfactory moments she had passed since her first rupture with ....., and urged the expediency of remaining firm to the old cause so vehemently, that none but a professed sister abbess could have withstood the torrent of her reasoning. “ Recent proof, said the able C....fs, will stand the test of any verbal evidence, and such proof it is either in your Ladyships power to acknowledge, or experience. I know the tyranny of husbands, should this bill be suffered to have unlimited scope. I know the invisible evils teeming in every article, but I leave the discovery of them to my superiors in council. This I assert, my M.... and myself shall oppose the whole system in all its stages. I beg leave, when it is thrown out, (which fortune cannot but promote) to make a second motion, a motion which I flatter myself, will tend to silence for the future any r...t rev. babbler, on the subject of women’s inconstancy.”

Some dispute arising a second time between Lady E...x, and Lady P...., it was thought necessary by the Lady President, that the former should ask pardon of the house, for the unmannerly interruption she had been guilty of. The angry C....fs took fire at the indig-



indignity, and after demolishing the *tetes* of several unfortunate Ladies less adepts than herself in the mysteries of self-defence, abruptly turned her back on the assembly, and vowed an instant discovery of their foul conspiracies. The Lady President, in consequence, ordered her into custody, and by that means robbed the public of an elegant Dissertation on manual exercise, which Lady E.... had prepared in expectation of some such debate. On Lady D....'s resuming her seat, the Duchefs of A..... rose, and apologized to the house for the indiscretion her D.... had been guilty of, in authorizing them to expect her negative on the bill, without cause of such procedure yet declared in any act or word from herself, and added, that she should in all probability be neuter on the occasion, as the younger members of the assembly would, in appearance, constitute a sufficient majority, without requiring any interest of their mothers.

The C....s Dowager of H.....n seconded the noble Dutcheffs in her observation on the visible inequality of the parties, and begged the attention of her right hon. compeeresses to the following remarks. We beg pardon if there be found any inaccuracies in the sentiments we have the honor to deliver as her Ladyship's. Such errors must be imputed to the interruptions Lady H..... met with from cat-calls, hissings, and other squeaking tokens of disapprobation, which vociferously surmounted the calm stile of her Ladyship's placid oratory.

C . . . . . S S D O W . O F H U . . . . . N .

“ Whether, in this unchristian house of assembly, it be the custom to address the society in general, or you, Lady President in chief, I am ignorant.---[ Her Ladyship was made acquainted that the house was to be addressed by the speaker, being of equal dignity with the house of L..ds] “ Whether I appeal to the one, or  
“ the



“ the other, I shrewdly suspect my voice will not be listened to  
 “ with that resignation, becoming the chastisement I propose to  
 “ inflict. My Ladies, vice in every shape has so pervaded this de-  
 “ voted country, that I despair of closing my career of life, 'ere  
 “ the manifestation of unlooked-for vengeance be a signal for the  
 “ destination you must await with obedience.” [A groan from  
 the opposite side of the house]. “ I have reason to hope that I  
 “ shall be called aside to behold the horrors that are bursting on  
 “ you, previous to the universal havock they are commissioned to  
 “ deal abroad; and while your Ladyships are gasping for breath,  
 “ and in the very action, swallowing whole torrents of fire, and  
 “ brimstone, I trust in the many secret intimations I have received,  
 “ that some of you will behold me, arrayed like a young virgin in  
 “ a snowy vesture, firmly seated on the rock of faith, and unmoved  
 “ at the display of your calamities.” (a hiss for some minutes)  
 “ The soft visions, the dear slumbers, the unutterable awakenings  
 “ I have been sensible of, give me authority to expect a total ex-  
 “ emption from the burning lakes, that are destined to become the  
 “ abode of your Ladyships.” (A cry of “ *the motion, the motion,*”  
 from all sides of the room). “ Permit me, my Ladies, to offer you  
 “ my reflections on the subject in question. I reverence matri-  
 “ mony, as a holy institution; and though I have without efficacy  
 “ preached its salutary benefits to a wilful ... of my own, believe  
 “ me it is of infinite service towards curbing the many vicious and  
 “ dangerous passions that reside in the female breast. The most  
 “ sacred characters, names which your Ladyships have never met  
 “ with but in the Almanack, plead in its defence, and have been  
 “ laborious in wiping from the mind any suspicions it may have  
 “ entertained concerning the impurity of such a connection. Your  
 “ Ladyships are not assuredly alarmed with fears of a similar na-  
 “ ture. The consolation you wish to be administered, is, I dare  
 “ say,



“ say, of a far different complexion, and such, as my most fan-  
 “ guine endeavors will be unable to furnish. But trust me, if ye  
 “ persevere in a system so unchaste, so unholy, so d--n-ble, you  
 “ will, as the dear Doctor has often warned the age, you must in-  
 “ disputably go to the d----. Consider these things, my Ladies,  
 “ reflect on the insults you have offered to your Lords and Masters,  
 “ and escape the torments due to the sin of ad-----y.” (Here a  
 general hiss, and repeated clamors) “ Your incessant lewd-  
 “ ness, my Ladies, have angered me to such a height, that I re-  
 “ gard your opposition no more than Stephen did the shower of  
 “ stones, which released him from the wickedness of the world.  
 “ As he looked forward to a happier kingdom, so do I to the dear  
 “ man, who has taught me to despise the common intercourse of  
 “ *human* felicities. In defence of the bill, I will harangue with  
 “ my dying breath, and had I the disposal of the thunder, no in-  
 “ dividual should survive the loss of her chastity. The fraudulent  
 “ dissembler and herself should work out their p-----tion in the  
 “ deepest pit of ----.” (An universal cry of, Order, Order)

L A D Y C . . . . N

After the violence of their Ladyships tumults was somewhat de-  
 creased, Lady C....n begged leave of the Lady President to note  
 down the noble Peerefs's last sentiment, as dangerous to the com-  
 munity in every sense, but particularly abundant with mischief to  
 the high court of P--l-----t, there assembled; “ For, (added  
 Lady C....n) “ though I have no apprehensions that such an event,  
 “ as the superlunary Countess hints at, will ever take place, yet I  
 “ judge it treasonable in any person, or persons, to premeditate the  
 “ perdition of the state, whether the execution of such plot be in-  
 “ tended in this world or the next.” The propriety of her Lady-  
 ship's reasoning being universally allowed, the latter sentence of

E

Lady



Lady H.....n's very animated address was copied verbatim, and delivered to the care of ----. Lady C....n proposed introducing a motion for the impeachment of the right hon. the C..... of H.....; at the next sitting of the house, charging the said C..... with wilfully, and maliciously threatening to destroy the lives of such of his Majesty's female subjects, as should have the resolution to ----- their husbands, also to imprison, and by indirect, and *in-human* means torture such young fellows, as should have the courage to aid and abet the said females in their patriotic endeavors to the said laudable purpose. Lady Hu.....n appeared insensible to the articles of impeachment, so personally directed against her, and was awakened from her celestial contemplation, merely by the silence that succeeded Lady C.....'s declaration. The right hon. Dow...r proceeded to condemn the unreasonable partiality shewn to ----dom in terms of undiminished asperity, and levelled her inveteracy with a severe attack on the mixed assemblies women are universally admitted to from their earliest years. Her Ladyship traced the negligence shewn to morality from the dangerous sentiments girls were taught to imbibe in their unconfined parties of pleasure, and derived the grand evils of domestic discontent from their habitual aversion to retirement. Those particulars of her Ladyship's speech, which were delivered with becoming temper, and candor, contained nothing which might not be defended on the most reasonable grounds. Whenever the eccentric widow was induced to take a peep into futurity, that placid moderation was no more the guide of her sentiments; a wild inconsistency of argument formed the less convincing substitute of sound doctrine.



## C . . . . . S S    o f    D . . . . . T H.

Lady D.....th seconded the noble Countess in her opposition to the licentious manners of the age, and declared herself perfectly unanimous with Lady H..... in supporting the articles of the bill. Her Ladyship begged leave to condemn certain indefensible principles visible in the noble Dow...r's train of reasoning, and represented them as subversive of the great basis of true religion and piety. " An amiable simplicity of manners (continued Lady D.....) " should be the original and invariable characteristic of female virtue. Every attribute, which may do honor to the sex, " must be the certain consequence of such an admirable principle. " The bill in dispute will, in all probability, by an exertion of its " influence, restore that purity of conduct which, till of late, has " formed the distinguishing trait of British education; and I cannot, on any rational foundation, conceive your Ladyships to be " averse to a system, that has already been productive of such essential felicity. The facility, with which the matrimonial knot " has been proved dissoluble, is a severe reflection on the chastity " of our morals. Your Ladyships have experienced the truth of " what I advance in frequent instances, many within the circle of " your dearest friends, and must be conscious of the criminal avidity which promotes a malady so malignant. The right rev. " author of the motion appears, in my judgment, to have maturely " considered the baleful consequences naturally concomitant on so " universal an anarchy, and by debarring the offending parties " from an honorable connexion, has excluded every argument " which might influence a woman, not totally lost to every sentiment of delicacy. I forbear to mention the necessary circumstances arising from a first interview, previous to the expiration " of a Calendar year. Your Ladyships, however negligent of the  
momen-



“ momentary misconduct, must, in your subsequent reflections,  
 “ call to mind the perpetuated disgrace you, by that means, incur  
 “ in a secondary view; and though a transient period of life may  
 “ rescue yourselves from the noxious poison, be assured the inno-  
 “ cent victims to its violence will ever criminate you as the au-  
 “ thors of their unmerited sufferings. These considerations will,  
 “ I think, prove of such importance, and the substance of them so  
 “ detrimental, that no opposition can reasonably be formed to a  
 “ bill which enforces a contrary train of sentiment. By giving it  
 “ your necessary sanction, those criminal allurements to infidelity,  
 “ which fallaciously impose on a credulous mind, will be removed,  
 “ and your Ladyships will be enabled to view the guilt and un-  
 “ happiness of conjugal dissention, in their natural and genuine  
 “ deformities. It may perhaps be asserted that such representa-  
 “ tions tend rather to object against the motion, and that by not  
 “ suffering it to pass, the prospect I have drawn will disappear; but  
 “ can you, my Ladies, be deliberately guilty of such an insult on  
 “ the very essence of virtue, as to check the wise regulations  
 “ which aim so visibly at its support? The sense of horror can-  
 “ not be so totally lost among you, that you should persist in the  
 “ extirpation of chastity, merely from an insensibility to its ami-  
 “ able sweetness, as the source of every domestic virtue. From  
 “ the present unhappy constitution of things, every woman may  
 “ incur the criminality of matrimonial perjury, without any other  
 “ condemnation than that of her conscience, which has been effi-  
 “ caciouly lulled to sleep previous to the commission of so un-  
 “ happy a mischief. Such a glaring defect in the policy of go-  
 “ vernment, joined to the uninterrupted possession of what her  
 “ passions have pourtrayed as a most desirable, and perhaps com-  
 “ mendable acquisition, becomes a strong inducement to a weak  
 “ and ill-governed mind, already biased in favor of licentious pur-  
 suits.



“ suits. Laws, therefore, for the correction of so notorious an  
 “ evil, are, in my opinion, conducive to the most salutary effects,  
 “ and will, I trust, meet with the concurrence of those of your  
 “ Ladyships, who regard the respect due to your own honor, and  
 “ that of your families.”

D . . . . S S o f D . . . . . R E.

The D...fs of D.....re, in a very pleasing stile of argument, de-  
 fended Lady D....’s assertions, and made some animated remarks  
 on the several articles of her Ladyship’s address, which peculiarly  
 concurred with the noble D....fs’s sentiments. Her Grace made  
 a striking distinction between the pastimes of gaiety and innocence,  
 and the dear-bought, and fatally experienced pleasures of a crimi-  
 nal connexion. The eloquent Peerefs expressed herself particularly  
 interested for those who, like herself, had not yet been conversant  
 in lessons of gravity, and who, from an early introduction into life,  
 were novices in the severe duties, incumbent on the married state.  
 The house appeared to listen with serious and willing attention to  
 the several arguments her Grace introduced for the revival of long-  
 neglected chastity, and suffered her very admirable address to meet  
 with none of that scurrilous interruption, which usually distin-  
 guishes right honorable opposition.

C . . . . . S S o f A . . . . . N.

On the close of her Grace’s speech, Lady A.....n rose, and la-  
 mented with energy of expression the little regard paid to matrimo-  
 nial engagements, and the universal indifference testified by both  
 parties on the solemnization of such sacred rights. Her Ladyship  
 confessed great cause of anxiety in the dissolute morals, which  
 marked the character of our present N-----y, but conceived such

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pleas



pleas a very inadequate sanction to the structure generally built on them. The prospect of reformation was not, in many instances, so remote, as to authorize a total change of scene on the part of the wife, neither was it the lesson of humanity to augment the misfortunes of a family, by giving an additional poignancy to their distresses. Her Ladyship reviewed the material articles of the bill, and entered very warmly into the propriety of their contents. Her sensibility was too great to treat of several apposite circumstances without emotion, and a flood of tears expressively marked the interested concern she took in their defence. The D....s of Ru....d, and Lady H....d, were much affected at this unexpected turn in the debate, and never appeared in a more amiable view, than in the kind anxiety they professed for her Ladyship's situation. By means of their joint endeavors to restore her wonted complacency, Lady A.... recovered that natural softness, which so peculiarly characterizes her manners, and after displaying an abundant share of persuasive eloquence, resumed her seat without any tokens of disapprobation from either party.

#### C . . . . . S S   o f   C . . K E .

Lady C..ke endeavored to share those silent marks of respect, which Lady A.... had so forcibly exacted from the devotees to slander and malevolence, but discovered the inefficacy of her attempt, from the general buz which followed her extempore dissertation on the fickleness of conjugal constancy. Her Ladyship's ill success seemed to throw a gloom on the few right honorables of her party. Some moments past before any farther effort was made on either side for a continuation of debate. The calm, however, was of short duration.

D....S



## D . . . . SS o F B . . . . . D.

After some previous remarks on the general tenor of the bill, her Grace the D----s D-w---r of B-----d condemned the proposition it contained, and addressed the house, as nearly as we can recollect, in the following terms. “ At a juncture, my Ladies, so alarming, “ and in a cause so unconstitutionally repugnant to female liberty, “ my freedom of sentiment will not, I hope, be judged the common jargon of B-----gate malevolence, or the produce of a soil less rich than that which distinguishes my origin. Rather let “ this august assembly impute any nice and critical deviations I “ may inadvertently be guilty of, to my zeal for their interests, “ and my universal attachment to the preservation of their natural “ privileges. It has been a growing maxim with myself, and, I “ trust, a well experienced truth with many of your Ladyships, “ that the subservience of woman should be directed by her convenience. The imposing authority of men is of so gross a nature, “ and unless duly curbed, is frequently carried to so considerable “ a length, that a non-resistance on our part, serves only to subjugate us more enormously, and render females the mere mechanical, passive ministers of their inimical procedures. If the evils “ of a state, if the dangerous doctrines, originating from the introduction of such boorish forms of *government* as those in the “ bill, have no influence with your Ladyships, will ye not take “ fire at the lurking treachery it contains? Will not your eyes “ be open to the mischievous operations which must ensue from it? “ In a word, will ye not be made sensible that, by suffering such “ a system to be authorized, ye lose the valuable support of all “ your superiority, free will? My Ladies, I confess I am animated. I glory in it. ’Tis a virtue to exercise a tongue of “ slander, when the existence of scandal is rapidly approaching to “ a crisis;



“ a crisis; for ye are aware, that, when the fuel is no more, the  
 “ flame must evaporate. The bench of B---ps consists of charac-  
 “ ters, in many circumstances, truly respectable. The welfare of our  
 “ souls is supposed to be the grand object those mitred sportsmen  
 “ have in view. I confess the propriety of such a chace, nor have  
 “ your Ladyships, I presume, any prevailing objection to seclude  
 “ so inconsiderable, and so ---- a number of Peers, from the grand  
 “ and right honorable assembly, for so laudable a purpose. But  
 “ shall their mandates of vengeance be issued out against the sex  
 “ with indiscriminate rudeness? Shall grandmothers be equally  
 “ comprehended in this tax on the mind, with novices of seven-  
 “ teen? I deprecate such an idea. Your experimental know-  
 “ ledge, my Ladies, is called in question, and I dare appeal to any  
 “ r---t r--vd. of them all, if we are not, in the sense of the nation,  
 “ allowed to have a greater insight into the good and evil arising  
 “ from matters of this denomination, than the most sanguine p---e  
 “ on the bench. Many noble L--ds who handled this subject  
 “ previous to the present discussion, have contemptuously hinted  
 “ at the frailty of (as they term it) the weaker sex. The inconfi-  
 “ derate errors those dignified beings have pronounced us obnoxio-  
 “ us to, are of so weak a nature, that they appear calculated  
 “ merely to terrify Misses in leading-strings. Seduction, with all  
 “ the various ills annexed to it, has been sagely introduced in  
 “ defence of the present motion, and those chaste restorers of such  
 “ long-exploded tenets as female delicacy, and honor, compli-  
 “ ment us, my Ladies, with giving cause to this public scrutiny  
 “ into the articles of our faith. *Sblood*, my Ladies, can women,  
 “ who have had the advantages of rank, who have known the  
 “ sweets of frightening their husbands, tamely submit to such an  
 “ insult on their feelings?---nay, on their dearest, tenderest feel-  
 “ ings? From myself, and I may venture to assert, from those

“ of



“ of my family connections influenced by my authority, this bill  
 “ will, in all probability, meet a direct and considerable oppo-  
 “ sition. Our interests, and indeed our sentiments, have hitherto  
 “ preserved that uniformity in political views, that we shall with-  
 “ out doubt be unanimous on a point that so notoriously makes for  
 “ our private welfare. Consider the tenor of so novel a policy, and  
 “ your Ladyships will find it a palpable scheme, clearly derived  
 “ from ministerial despotism. The prevalence of similar machina-  
 “ tions has already been so successful as to shackle husbands, fa-  
 “ thers, and brothers, and shall we, the only representatives of in-  
 “ dependence, the only guardians of free speech and action, unite  
 “ in voluntary bondage? No, rather may we quit a soil, where  
 “ servitude is so illiberally welcomed; and where ladies of gravity,  
 “ who with unwearied perseverance have laboured from their first  
 “ introduction to society, in preserving the rights and liberties of  
 “ of the community, are scandalously, maliciously, nay h—ll—ly  
 “ forbid an honest interview with the pretty fellow they admire!  
 “ My Ladies, I ask pardon for my warmth, but there are many  
 “ of you (I appeal principally to the Dowagers) who must, from  
 “ the course of things, have the good cause equally at heart with  
 “ myself. It may be said, the circumstances of the bill do not  
 “ aim at the widowed state. I grant it, but are not our children  
 “ equally dear to us with ourselves? Is not the bar, that im-  
 “ pedes their plan of operations, of equal injury to us who are  
 “ originally interested in the promotion of them? Let me ask the  
 “ noble Peerefs in the white and silver her most secret senti-  
 “ ments on this subject. Exclusive of the good-will she bears her  
 “ very amiable issue, she has another object invariably in view; a  
 “ second union in matrimony. Whether the eager partiality with  
 “ which she pursues the dear change arise from political, or more

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“ domestic



“ domestic attachments, it is not material to determine. A satiety  
 “ may, and by the assistance of her amicable connections, must  
 “ ensue, and as inevitably be succeeded by a system *diametrically*  
 “ distinct. In this case, my Ladies, a change in measures or of  
 “ men, the death of either party, most probably of her Ladyship,  
 “ are events almost inseparably attendant on the course of a calendar  
 “ year. The consummation therefore of the ceremonial rites of  
 “ Hymen may be for ever impeded, and the Lady, however re-  
 “ gardless of controul, must subject herself in many senses to the  
 “ annihilation of many interesting and favorite systems. On these,  
 “ and other equally material grounds, I have ventured to represent  
 “ the bill as containing a leading principle adapted to the de-  
 “ struction of our freedom, as an independent part of the creation.  
 “ Your Ladyships will, I hope, have no objections to offer, as I  
 “ am so well informed of your candor on this head, that it will  
 “ surprize me to hear an English Peere's dispute the orthodoxy of  
 “ my sentiments.”

Her Grace might with propriety be said to have taken the lead in  
 opposition, as the arguments she introduced appeared thoroughly  
 to coincide with the sense of the house. On resuming her seat, the  
 Dow—r Lady A—r, and Lady G——r were on their legs together.  
 Each professed a more than ordinary zeal for the cause in agitation,  
 and seemed unwilling to wave any privilege that might plead for  
 priority. After unsatisfactory altercations, it was determined to  
 abide by the decision of the assembly, who pronounced Lady  
 G——r to possess an undoubted claim to precedency, from the many  
 experimental lights her knowledge of men and manners might en-  
 able her to throw on the various niceties of the subject in confi-  
 deration. Her Ladyship, after acknowledging the compliment, so  
 universally paid to the deep researches of her indefatigable in-  
 dustry,



dustry, prefaced a peculiar richness of argument to the following purport :

LADY G———R.

“ My LADIES,

“ Many are the advantages I enjoy under the auspices of a situa-  
 “ tion which your Ladyships warmest wishes have yet been unable  
 “ to reach. Thanks to my stars, for I have no obligation to  
 “ earthly influence, my various pursuits in life have been attended  
 “ throughout with truly authoritative information, and guided by  
 “ implicit attention to national welfare. Mistake me not, my  
 “ Ladies, when I say *national*, I would confine the licentious  
 “ bounds usually put to this term ; its extent is far too unlimited.  
 “ Give me leave to exclude all *male* pretences to an epithet so na-  
 “ turally and conveniently calculated for the sole use of ourselves.  
 “ The sources of good and evil, your Ladyships will unanimously  
 “ confess, have no existence but with us. Should not the streams  
 “ then that arise from them be obedient to parental controul ?  
 “ And yet those self-same streams, defiled as some of them are with  
 “ filth foreign to our shores, have dared not only to usurp a prior  
 “ authority to our own, but give laws, nay, compulsory laws, to  
 “ the total exclusion of our sex’s jurisdiction. At this threatening  
 “ period we are assembled, my Ladies, for the purpose of sub-  
 “ verting a system which stabs the vitals of our constitution ; and  
 “ I well know, from the many excellent precepts your Ladyships  
 “ have heretofore imbibed, that you would prefer the loss of life  
 “ to that of its invaluable treasure, a treasure surpassing the de-  
 “ scriptive fire of eloquence, a treasure your mothers and grand-  
 “ mothers have maintained with united and irresistible torrents of  
 “ threats, prayers, ill language, and omnipotent invective. Re-  
 “ sources



“ sources such as these have been the ordinary aids called in to the  
 “ defence of our just rights. The times were then equally mo-  
 “ derate with the measures : a change in the one necessarily calls  
 “ for a speedy reformation in such particulars of the other, as are  
 “ unefficient to cope with the violence of a reinforcement. The  
 “ objections I have yet heard stated against the bill now before  
 “ this assembly, are equally the dictates of sound reason and can-  
 “ dor. I only fear they will not meet with the serious attention  
 “ adequate to the cause in which we are embarked, owing to a  
 “ sort of pusillanimity which runs thro’ the course of our debates.  
 “ That manly spirit so greatly celebrated throughout the territories  
 “ of Britain is lost, and I dare aver, irretrievably lost from the  
 “ breasts of our husbands. To their wives then ultimately belongs  
 “ a *renouvellement*, if possible, of so inestimable a blessing. The  
 “ honorable shackles our spouses are graciously forging for us, af-  
 “ ford a very sufficient and striking preface of the purpose for which  
 “ they are intended. Shall not we, who have till now demolished  
 “ every barrier of opposition, who have nobly worn the breeches,  
 “ and even carried them as the noblest bearing of our shields, in-  
 “ variably persevere in curbing magisterial insolence ? Your Lady-  
 “ ships scorn the insult offered in such a suspicion, and will, I am  
 “ convinced, rather at once act openly, as I have done, than tamely  
 “ submit to such restraints as your husbands please to put on the  
 “ freedom of your inclinations. I need not waste time in pointing  
 “ out such parts of the motion as I think injurious to our happi-  
 “ ness. My life and conduct are every day subject to scrutiny, and  
 “ I appeal to the language they speak, as explanatory of my senti-  
 “ ments. I hate the stinting incumbrances of matrimonial chastity,  
 “ and ye know it. The amendment therefore I shall propose,  
 “ will, I have reason to flatter myself, meet the general approbation



“ of all well-wishers to female felicity. The tenor of it I would  
 “ advise to the following purport.—That unconditional liberty be  
 “ granted to all females, or if such indulgence be found unmeet, to  
 “ those wedded to Eng — sh P — rs, after the term and expiration  
 “ of one calendar year and an half, to be forthwith dissolved from  
 “ all matrimonial restraint and obligation; and if their attachments  
 “ lead them, to contract marriage with any one who may be found  
 “ willing to be party in such an engagement on similar terms.  
 “ The certain advantages which society must reap from a system  
 “ so benevolent, will immediately strike your Ladyships, when you  
 “ consider the increase of individuals it will occasion, jointly with  
 “ the enviable variety offered in so liberal proposals. Our husbands,  
 “ well aware of our then omnipotent influence, will be careful in  
 “ doing their best in every shape, while we may terrify them into  
 “ a compliance with the most romantic measures, by urging the  
 “ facility of an immediate separation.”

Her Ladyship, after appealing separately to many noble Ladies, in defence of such particulars as were immediately connected with their respective interests and situations, concluded her negative on the original motion in terms of great acrimony, and poignant satire against many right honorable patronesses of the bill.

LADY A — — R.

The Dow — r Lady A — r, fearful of having her claim a second time disputed, anxiously waited the conclusion of her noble intimate's harangue, previous to the final storm of — — and — —. The oratorical widow ran cursorily through the many DOMESTIC felicities she had experienced during the life of her late ever-to-be-lamented L — d, and seriously vowed she had found a flatness in her

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present



present state, which she could not by any means be pleased with. "Restraint," said the noble Peerefs, "gives a whet to woman's inclinations, and the pleasures we steal, have a relish untasted in an assurance of their being easily attainable." Her Ladyship made an evident distinction between the curbing authority of a husband, and that of the legislature, considering it no unsurmountable task to lull the one to sleep, but an Herculean labour to depress the gradually increasing strength of the other. After citing a variety of instances, many within her own recollection, of Ladies who had manfully withstood every opposition but that of the — Court; Lady A—— particularised the case of many females individually who were, from most interested motives, anxiously waiting the issue of their Ladyships determinations. "Trembling for the consequences of such a rash attempt," added the elegant matron, "our L——ds and masters in the Upper H——se, have till now, fearfully avoided a step, that must incur the mischievous displeasure of their wives; and as in the articles of matrimony we ordinarily engage a certain and sufficient share of authority to ourselves, methinks it is no unnatural usurpation to claim the power and privilege of such a prerogative." On these grounds her Ladyship voted for the utter exclusion of the bill, and counselled Lady G—— to withdraw her motion till a considerable majority should have thoroughly effaced every tinge of the present ep——p——al stain on their indisputable chastity.

Dow——r C——ss of HA——G——N.

The Dow——r C——ss of H——ton rose next to beg the attention of the house on a point of some importance to the subject in controversy. Her Ladyship premised the particular circumstance



she intended introducing, by a review of the lives and moral characters of several very distinguished Members of the Sup—r House of P——t, and deduced from thence a natural consequence of the necessity their Ladyships were under to cause an enquiry to be severally made into the living and p—ch—g of the R——t R——d author of the bill; “ For,” added the well-informed dame, “ if the  
 “ tenor of his life be uniformly such, as may authorize a general  
 “ condemnation of his tenets, we shall not only be enabled to  
 “ throw out the different clauses contained in the motion, but may  
 “ substitute some less untractable —, to introduce indulgencies  
 “ more favorable to the cause we have at heart. From the information, a noble relation of his —ship’s has amply afforded  
 “ me, I discover him to be a poor simple —, partly recommended to a M—tre by my Lord —, whom your Ladyships  
 “ have experienced to be but a doubtful friend to the community.  
 “ If we must be shackled, my Ladies, let the chain be forged by  
 “ — or ——. By suffering an *impartial* censure on our lives  
 “ and doctrines, we shall shortly dwindle into wives of old, who  
 “ knew no law, but from the despotic sway of their husbands.  
 “ The Bp. of — is the most improper man in the world, at an  
 “ attempt of this nature. His resident and experimental knowledge  
 “ has been so deficient, and his method of framing bills so wanting in spirit, that we have not the least glimmering of a loop-hole to escape by. And will your Ladyships encourage such a  
 “ bungler as this? A bungler, whose motions merely tend to the  
 “ suppression of far better motions than his own? A bungler,  
 “ whose unsociable austerities are wilful; for I can assure the  
 “ noble assembly, it is no family failing. Surely, my Ladies, the  
 “ genius of the times is such, that you will shudder at a system so  
 “ opposite to every one of your sentiments.”—Her Ladyship proceeded  
 some



some moments in a similar turn of reasoning ; and after having commented on particular parts of the bill, expressed an abhorrence of the partial severity denounced against the female offender, while the more criminal seducer was permitted to boast his infamy without molestation. The noble Peerefs continued her very enforcing harangue by counselling the house to issue out a menacing protest against such of his Majesty's Ministers, and such of their measures as should thus daringly aim at the root of female self-government ; and after reminding their Ladyships how necessarily it concerned their interests to act unanimously on the occasion, ended her address in the following extraordinary stile : “ My Ladies, you are all well  
 “ aware that man is a very serviceable, and frequently a very social  
 “ animal. The immoderate share we submit to in the disposal of  
 “ life's burthens, ought also to make him a very obedient and submissive one. Some sober females, if any there can be met with  
 “ on this debate, may, as they think, with great confidential assurance, deduce a superiority on the husband's side, from what  
 “ they call the great purpose of creation, and running through a voluminous comment on the ill-founded dominion of these lordly  
 “ beings, may assert the propriety of their arguments, by an appeal to the mandates issued to our first parents. But let these  
 “ un-orthodox, inactive misses, for surely, none such are advanced to discretion, consider, that previous to the fall, Eve had but  
 “ an inferior share of toil allotted her. On the introduction of child-birth, nursing, &c. the tables were turned. Even in the  
 “ simplest times, such duties formed a round of cares, far exceeding the incompetent labors of their spouses. Now that the various niceties of female education become additional articles in  
 “ the account, your Ladyships cannot, I think, retain a doubt of  
 “ meriting that superiority your husbands should be compelled to acknowledge



“ knowledge on this authority, I vote for an immediate declaration  
“ of independence.”

Her Ladyship had hardly closed her speech, when notice was given to the house that Lord T——d, with an armed force was preparing an assault, in appearance, to the subversion of the Senate, but as his Lordship expressed, for the purpose of rescuing his much-loved Lady from the jaws of such a many-headed monster. Lady T——d's countenance expressed a more than usual degree of dread at the apprehension of so menacing a calamity.

#### LADY T——D.

The amiable V——s had, however, presence of mind sufficient to make this short address to the less-experienced in matrimonial terrors. “ My Ladies, however extensive may be the privileges of a husband, they can never, in my opinion, usurp the  
“ smallest authority over any other individual than his wife. My  
“ L——d's attack, therefore, must be considered in a higher degree offensive, as the many right honorable Members, which  
“ compose this body corporate, are disproportionate to a simple  
“ limb of its political arrangement. Your Ladyships cannot therefore consider this affront, but as a common injury, and while  
“ you combine to shelter me from the rudeness of his ungentlemanlike paws, you will have the satisfaction to crush a most detrimental and insolent opposition in its infancy.” The noble Peereſſes without hesitation deputed Lady F——th, with consent of the Lady P——t, to notify their resolutions of defence to the martial V——t. Her Ladyship's irresistible dignity, accompanied with a firmness of argument, uncommon in the fair-sex, somewhat surprized Lord T—— and his valorous adherents. A torrent of eloquence, rich



in the most powerful expressions which language could admit of, gained a final victory on the female side. The sons of Mars were struck with amazement at the unlooked-for resistance, and their noble leader, grounding his arms, submissively asked pardon for the hostile appearance his well-meaning friends had made; he but besought them to restore his wife, his own dear chicken, the only consolation of his *heavy hours*. The noble Lord ventured to hint that Lady T—— was too young for their Ladyships instruction, that she was a fit companion only for such a fond old fellow as himself, and that were the dear creature more versed in right honorable machinations, his poor grey locks must be the sufferers. Lady F——th knew from experience how impolitic it was to capitulate with a cliuacterical husband, and displayed her usual generalship in the reply she made to his *very piteous manifesto*; she represented to his Lordship how ill-judged a thing it was, to have ever connected merely with the view of pleasing himself, and how cruel to exclude Lady T—— from parties of pleasure abroad, when he must know no such enjoyments were to be expected at home. After a very candid condemnation of the several misdemeanors the amorous Peer had been guilty of, her Ladyship denounced vengeance, the foulest vengeance against him, if he, or any of his corps dared make any hostile assertions of their iniquitous and unconstitutional demands. The strenuous defender of her self-created rights, who might with propriety be stiled the English Joan of Arc, had hitherto addressed the King's forces from the casement. On concluding her animated harangue, her Ladyship turned disdainfully from the *regulars*, and *Te Deum* was *nem. con.* vociferated from all sides of the House of Assembly. Lord T——d well-knowing, like the Trojan exile, that there were no laurels gained in the conquest of a woman, added a farther consideration of his own, and wisely thought the renown of



conquering *many*, would not repay the risque. Unhappily, the noble leader had no marquee wherein to hold a general consultation, so without the form of previous deliberation, all operations for a siege were ordered to be discontinued till farther notice, and the M—G— of the B— of O— retired to his private meditations like the *son of Peleus*, parted from his bed-maker *Briseis*.

The *male* conducted assault had occasioned some share of consternation among the timorous members of the Congress, and served to discover the truth of matters more evidently than it could be gathered from the fallacious declarations of their Ladyships. The rosy hue forsook the cheeks of those Peereffes, whose *provinces* lay at the disposal of their husbands. Some disaffected members endeavoured to conceal their *dependence*, by joining in a superior peal of joyous acclamations. Their efforts however proved insufficient; many ladies of great fame, who had been studious on every occasion to give the lie to their Lord's supremacy, and who were thought to have carried matrimonial indifference to the highest pitch, were extravagantly disconcerted at Lord T—'s unexpected visit, and expressed the violence of their agitations, by the difficulty with which they were pacified on Lady F—th's return.

#### LADY DOWAGER ST—E.

\* Lady Dowager St—e was surprizingly ruffled, and began to recant all the menaces she had thrown out against a husband's prerogative. The fortitude her Ladyship had ever displayed in her private parties, was now no more. The noble Dowager was about

\* Her Ladyship's first husband was one of the Sixteen Peers for Scotland, from whence she lays claim to a seat, as Dowager.



to present a formal complaint of Mr. ——'s ill usage, when Lady F—— dispelled the enormity of her terrors by bringing the agreeable intelligence that the royal army had retreated to —— Park.

THE D——SS OF GR——N.

The D——s of Gr——n, though she had taken no part in the debate, seemed much agitated, lest her very *graceful* lord and master should suspect her allegiance to his infallibility.

THE HON. MRS. N——.

The Honorable Mrs. N——, though she professed her Lord to be of a spiritual and pacific temper, was in some dread, lest a regard to temporal interest should call off the P——te's attention from higher concerns. She trembled at the idea of a lashing, though from the hand of a B——, and envied the happy lives of her equals in rank, the Honorable Mrs. C—— and Mrs. H——ffe.

An infinite majority of P——fles retained their usual imp——ce amidst the surrounding dangers, and seemed insensible to any impressions their husbands could administer. The Dow——rs were intolerably bold on the occasion, and reproached the *young and fore-afraid* with imbecility, and irresolution. During the cessation of debate several *curtain verities* were indiscriminately brought to light; but as they did not interfere with the bill in controversy, it will be unnecessary to introduce them. Good order being once more restored, the Lady P——f——t was about to read the bill, for the purpose



purpose of dividing, when Lady \*N—— begged leave to make some cursory remarks on *the extraordinary and truly Episc—l Motion*. Lady N——, Lady N——, was repeated universally, and her Ladyship acknowledged the impartiality which prevailed.

LADY N——.

The noble Peerefs's sentiments were delivered nearly in the following words :

“ My Ladies,

“ I heartily join with an eloquent speaker in this day's debate,  
 “ in considering marriage merely as a temporary concern. The  
 “ obsolete article of *till death do us part*, is of so rude a texture,  
 “ that I foresee it will, in a term of years, be totally inadmissible,  
 “ and the little regard paid at present to its authority, makes that  
 “ period still less remote. An improvement in the matrimonial ser-  
 “ vice should therefore be insisted on, since there is no longer an  
 “ accomplishment of the duties it expresses ; and such a concern  
 “ as this ultimately respects the spiritual bench. Those right re-  
 “ verend ministers of morality should form a code of laws answerable  
 “ to the spirit of the times, and as our manners have long since  
 “ been rebellious to *proclamations* human and divine, it is necessary  
 “ that the vanquished party should at length quit the field, and a  
 “ more tractable sovereignty be instituted amongst us. The bill  
 “ now depending is of so extraordinary a nature, that it not only  
 “ puts a negative on the above particulars, but whereas the re-  
 “ straints of the church merely command an internal and voluntary  
 “ obedience to the several unfashionable tenets they contain ; this  
 “ strangely plotted piece of spiritual mechanism exercises an imme-

\* Her Ladyship has a seat as Dowager C——s of B——.

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“ diate



“ diate and afflicting vengeance on those who have forsworn the  
 “ fidelity they were led to profess. To suffer the ignominy of a  
 “ divorce from an odious fellow, who like ———, may have, from  
 “ politic views, acted in concert with the adulterer; never to be  
 “ blessed in a legal union with the man, whose merit has been the  
 “ all-effecting machine of your infidelity: to become an exile from  
 “ the world, in what is called an honorable view, and for the space  
 “ of a calendar year to be debarred from a share of those privi-  
 “ leges, which are permitted and enforced by heavenly institution,  
 “ are marks of despotism, which stand unexampled in a country,  
 “ where the liberty of the subject is not utterly extinct. Such,  
 “ my Ladies, are the articles I have produced, as tyranni-  
 “ cally oppressive. The arbitrary principles they contain must be  
 “ glaringly visible on the slightest review. Your Ladyships need  
 “ not wait the execution of such fundamental evils, before you are  
 “ aware how fatally they aim at the immediate introduction of  
 “ slavery, nor does that slavery consist in simple subjection to one  
 “ tyrant only; it extends throughout the universal system of  
 “ matrimony. Every individual of our sex, from the moment she  
 “ becomes a wife, signs herself the willing subject of her Lord’s  
 “ imperious government. Should she be anxious to get relief from  
 “ the galling chain, I now see no prospect of such an event. Our  
 “ laws are so constituted, that the husband, by avoiding certain  
 “ frantic irregularities, may prevent either a separation or divorce.  
 “ A woman’s misery is no prevailing argument in favour of her pe-  
 “ tions, nor will such pleas be in any respect attended to, provided  
 “ she have no marks of brutality to expose. The last expedient of  
 “ a woman thus situated has hitherto been consulted with success.  
 “ Your Ladyships make the application merely in your own de-  
 “ fence; you continue to *forsake all other*, till your husbands forget

“ to



“ *to cherish and comfort.* When those very essential requisites are  
 “ defective, the solemnization oaths are first broken by *the man.*  
 “ *The woman* would be sinful, in *forbearing.* While matters re-  
 “ mained in this state, there existed a kind of partiality in the pre-  
 “ rogatives of each party. The husband’s offences could not,  
 “ without a high degree of female indelicacy, be pleaded before a  
 “ court of justice by the wife. She therefore took a different me-  
 “ thod to make him sensible of the affront, and he, if blessed with  
 “ any portion of sensibility, was equally assiduous in displaying the  
 “ honors he had acquired. A divorce took place. Each was happy  
 “ in the change. The Lady bestowed her legal affections on a more  
 “ amiable object, and the gentleman used his influence to a similar  
 “ purpose. I need not embellish that halcyon period with unneces-  
 “ sary flowers of rhetoric. Many of your Ladyships have *most*  
 “ *intimately* felt the golden blessing of such an æra, and from that  
 “ consideration will be peculiarly interested in the iron scene ap-  
 “ proaching into view. The present fatal reverse cannot but dis-  
 “ cover its horror far and wide. That unexpected hour, when a  
 “ woman shall, by virtue of parliamentary edicts, be for ever  
 “ snatched from the possession of the man she admires, cannot but  
 “ compose a striking page in the volume of time, and when the  
 “ reasons of such restraint are duly weighed, they will neither re-  
 “ dound to the reputation of our husbands, or the grave policy of  
 “ our C——ts of Parl——t. In short, my Ladies, the cruelty of  
 “ such a bill is not of a piece with the refinement of the present  
 “ age. It rather suits a period of barbarity, where the ill-planned  
 “ maxims of state politics have proved subversive of their own  
 “ purposes. The article which denounces vengeance against any  
 “ *registered* connection for the space of twelve Calendar months,  
 “ makes us w—— in spite of our teeth. That women will be



“ resolute in —— their husbands, if those husbands deserve the fa-  
 “ vour, is a truth undeniable, and an illegality that challenges pre-  
 “ vention. Those laws therefore that forbid the healing such an  
 “ offence, without being able to probe the wound itself, must be  
 “ deficient, for when the disorder has *taken root*, time only can put  
 “ an end to its progress. The very *considerate* author of the motion  
 “ ought therefore to have stiled his bill, An Act for the effectual  
 “ furtherance of —— and —— . Your Ladyships can find  
 “ no advantage in suffering such a parl—t—y monster as this to  
 “ ravage the country, for you are sensible you may still live in a  
 “ state of ——, without ep—cop-l authority. Many peculiar in-  
 “ conveniencies will attend your different interests individually,  
 “ and in a variety of shapes, by a compliance with the motion. I  
 “ have reason therefore to hope, from the several arguments intro-  
 “ duced by many P—s—es of this truly honorable Assembly, that  
 “ so unconstitutional a bill will meet with general disapproba-  
 “ tion.”——

#### THE LADY P—S—T.

The Lady P—f—t having quitted her chair of state, ranked as a  
 simple Peerefs, and after complimenting Lady N—— on the very  
 extensive field her Ladyship had taken in the debate, made a com-  
 parative stricture on the different arguments introduced by each party  
 in defence of their several opinions. The noble and eloquent  
 B——s declared her anxieties to be effectually at an end, from the  
 sanguine expectations she had now conceived of a total exclusion of  
 the bill. Her Ladyship confessed the agreeable surprize she had ex-  
 perienched in finding so few of that most honorable house in alliance  
 with Ch——st—y. Her intentions, had the majority been in treaty  
 with



with virtue, were to promote a sufficient number of Irish P—sles, and Commoners Ladies, to the superior rank of Peereesses of Great Britain, and by that means to secure an adequate *force* for the defence of the *coast*, in case of an *unlooked-for* attack from the enemies to A—y. “For,” added the magnanimous descendant of Sch—g, “our Irish friends are no luke-warm partizans, no “wavering shilly-shally advocates in defence of *the Bill of Rights*. “They have ever stoutly stood up for *the liberty of the press*, and “preserve an honorable antipathy to *search-warrants*. Nor do they “confine their interests to the sister kingdom only, England has “been blessed with the favourable aspect they bestow on B—sh “*manufacture*; and though their husbands may be natives of the “dominions whence they receive their titles, believe me, their “cic—beo’s are of our own *produce*. As circumstances are now “situated, I trust there will be no necessity of calling in so potent “and numerous *a militia*. The *standing army* we have at present “encamped will be sufficient to repel all episc—l inroads.”

The D—ss of L—.

The D—s of L— rose, in some haste, to combat the bold assertions of the hereditary senatress, and expressed her surprize at the unmerited *compliment* her Ladyship had passed on the P—sles of Ireland. Her Grace’s figure and address added much to the elegance with which she delivered a train of sentiments that did honor to the drooping cause she wished to revive. The house was struck with the convincing mildness of her patriotic defence, and could not refrain from silently requiring some further proofs of Lady C—s’s bold declaration. The D—s in person called on her Ladyship for an explanation of the facts she had advanced, and ap-

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pealed



pealed to the authority of recent information for the support of her well-grounded opposition. “ The luxury that reigns in this metropolis,” continued the amiable Peerefs of both kingdoms, “ is an evil unknown throughout the extent of Ireland. Our sex partake, in a proportionate share, of that simplicity and manly virtue which characterize Hibernian manners; nor is the hardiness which distinguishes our husbands and brothers enervated by the effeminacies so injuriously introduced and so universally patronized in Great Britain. From that impolitic refinement which you experience from your younger years, you may date the progressive growth of such evils as affect the timid virtue which should protect your unsuspecting innocence. The ease and elegance which reign throughout the palaces of the great, give admission to a similarity of manners, and the variety of lethæan felicities abroad, obliterate the amiable duties requisite at home. To the thoughtless indulgence of these fallacies, you owe the unintentional commission of irregularities which misbecome the daughters of Virtue; and even these were trivial, did they not engage attention by their repeated allurements, and did not those allurements throw an obscurity over a subsequent scene, which, to a mind yet innocent, need but be viewed to be abhorred. The temptations you are obnoxious to, have no influence with us: their exclusion is one grand cause of the rectitude of our conduct; and it is on those characters only, who have a constant intercourse with yourselves, that such an opprobrious reflexion as Lady C——’s, can with justice be pointed. Ladies, nominally Irish, but whose manners are, and have ever been guided by English education, may possibly be influenced by such principles as the Lady P——f——t remarks. When I say education, I would not be thought to mean those original lessons which they are taught to imbibe in their infant subservience



“ servience to scholastic authority. During that period, I pronounce  
 “ them advocates for virtue. It is in the social and amicable en-  
 “ gagements they form, on entering the world, that I perceive the  
 “ first seeds of a vicious inclination. Their maturity is speedily  
 “ hastened, and the vegetation of those excrescences, which the  
 “ ill-informed Lady P—f—t has discovered, may be a concomitant  
 “ circumstance with the ripeness of the plant. Such Irish Peereffes  
 “ as those, her Ladyship may perhaps call in with convenience: the  
 “ native and resident nobility of that country will scorn the dignity.”

The Lady P—f—t begged pardon for the interruption she had occasioned in the debate, by the introduction of a subject foreign to the great cause *sur le Tapis*, and requested the noble Duchefs to consider the rusticity of those antique maxims, which her Grace had endeavoured to model for the present times. The sanguine leader of her party was abundantly strenuous in defence of the bold attack she had commenced on Hibernian chastity, and declared the veracity of her information to be undeniable. Her Ladyship expressed herself fearful lest the Duchefs should have confined her knowledge to the back settlements, and intreated the noble Peerefs to employ her emissaries within the more moderate compass of D—lin. Time and experience would, she asserted, sufficiently explain the truth of her assertions.

The C——ss of J——.

The C——fs of J—— surveying the house with a becoming assurance, appealed to each Right Honorable individually, if such *bandied* arguments as those of the two uninteresting disputants could be of the smallest satisfaction to the assembly. “ We are  
 “ come here,” added her Ladyship, “ for the purpose of curbing  
 “ the overgrown insolence of *stale morality*, and our attention is to  
 “ be



“ be employed in listening to the slander of private pique. I bear  
 “ no resentment to either party for the animated efforts they are  
 “ making in the practice of scurrility, but for scandal’s sake, let  
 “ some other moment be set apart for the display of such man-  
 “ œuvres. The appointment we have at present made is for poli-  
 “ tical harangue. To such engagements, therefore, let us be steady  
 “ adherents, and, in this first day of session, prove ourselves equal  
 “ to the task of reversing the decrees of parliament. Our hus-  
 “ bands crouch already beneath a domestic yoke; let the *Salique*  
 “ freedom of their senate have a proportionate degree of servi-  
 “ tude. For the speedy accomplishment of this great end, I  
 “ would propose an absolute dismissal of the bill. The im-  
 “ mediate substitute of so unwarrantable an infringement of  
 “ our rights cannot, with sound policy, be yet considered. When  
 “ we have, in our *curtain lectures*, convinced *the rabble* of their  
 “ unparalleled rudeness, we shall find a convenient season for im-  
 “ posing on them such laws as *our representatives* are bound to abide  
 “ by. The future existence of the three estates of this kingdom  
 “ may still be permitted, provided each be steadfast in our interests.  
 “ Of the first, I have most reason to doubt: his M — has never  
 “ shewn more than complaisance to the disappointed ambition of  
 “ such of our sex as have tried the experiment. M — of H —,  
 “ like Lady S —, are compelled to endure the indifference of  
 “ *looks unmeaning*, and survive the tyrannous insensibility, but in the  
 “ prospect of a more benign S —r. In the House of P —, I  
 “ experience a more favorable landscape. Those titled senators,  
 “ whether sp — or temp —, are so agitated with *hymenæal terrors*,  
 “ that they will give up all state-considerations for that more  
 “ weighty one of *home-tranquillity*. The C —ns are somewhat  
 “ more refractory, I confess, but may be *brought over* at the next  
 “ general



“ general election. Their interest with *St. Stephen* depends wholly  
 “ and solely on kissing, so that we may make them pay our price.  
 “ I leave the disposal of the Sixteen P—rs to those of your Lady-  
 “ ships, who have experimental knowledge *du goût d'Ecosse*. From  
 “ my own presumption, I would venture a pecuniary application,  
 “ with a proviso, in case of the Duke of G——’s refusal. I  
 “ lose sight of the subject-matter in debate, therefore shall sit down  
 “ in expectation of a considerable majority for throwing out the  
 “ motion.”

## LADY L——N.

Lady L——n rose, on the noble Countess’s silence, and, after  
 expressing a neutrality in the present controversial debate, requested  
 the attention of the house on a point which required mature deli-  
 beration, previous to the rising of that very honorable society.—  
 “ Your Ladyships,” added the much injured Peerefs, “ have with  
 “ great political *finesse* well considered the different interpretations  
 “ which may be put on the articles of the bill, and seem resolved  
 “ to strain every nerve, rather than submit to the restraints it im-  
 “ poses. I argue not in defence, or opposition of such particulars,  
 “ as my single interest will be insufficient to predominate in either  
 “ scale. The only purpose of my rising is to engage your good in-  
 “ tentions in favour of a circumstance not totally unconnected with  
 “ the papers before the house. In case of a divorce, supposing the  
 “ husband to have already squandered the fortune he received in  
 “ marriage, I shall introduce a motion for the purpose of resti-  
 “ tution, in whatever shape the wife may judge convenient. As  
 “ your Ladyships seem anxious for the *more effectual encouragement*  
 “ of divorces, you must, in all probability, be desirous, for the  
 “ honor of the sex, to make them as agreeable as possible to the fe-

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“ male



“ male party. The recovery of her own fortune in the possession  
 “ of her Lord’s patrimonial estates will, I judge, be answerable to  
 “ the wish of any of your Ladyships who may have the prospect  
 “ of a legal separation in view. I shall, in consequence of this, on  
 “ a future day, move that such a bill receive the sanction and autho-  
 “ rity of this very honorable house of Corr——n.”

## LADY F——TH.

Lady F——th declared her thorough approbation of the motion, and professed herself happy in the assurance of its being very warmly supported. The *very noble* V——fs confessed she had no *interested* views in seconding such a proposal, and therefore hoped Lady L—— would consider the part she took in favor of the bill, to proceed simply from her sense of its propriety.

The D——fs Dowager of B—— and Lady C——y had long labored under severe agitations. They had, however, so far moderated their natural warmth of temper, as to sit still with decent resignation, till Lady F——’s reiteration of complimentary small-talk awakened their violence to its highest pitch. Her Grace rose, without waiting the V——fs’s permission, and broke the thread of her discourse with, D——n it.

Lady C—— seconded the indignity with, “ Zounds, my Ladies, have ye lost your wits? let’s call for tea, or coffee.” The studious investigation of the passions innate in the brute creation will probably have remarked the rising fury of grimalkin, when she is at oratorical variance with an adversary of the canine breed. Such geniusses alone are able to describe the conflicting violence that agitated the heroic soul of Lady F——. Had the the *right honorable* birth of the *fiery* V——fs permitted the suspicion, we should have judged the



the system of her nerves to have been under the impulse of *convulsions*, so universal and hideous were the distortions she exhibited. Her Grace of B——, like *Major Oakley* in the comedy, swore she would sacrifice the first that offered a drop of water to her recovery, and brandished her *arm* in token of defiance. Such hostile menaces from so dread a Dow——r, intimidated the most resolute, and amongst the rest, the *wilful* C——s T——, who had compassionately drawn a very convenient piece of furniture from her side-pocket. The generous *cordiality* visible in her Ladyship's features, required no proofs of the *honest integrity* with which she acted. At so critical a moment, when the strongest *Eau de vie* might be judged the most applicable, the *good soul* could not refrain from broaching her pocket-bottle, and had just ventured to pronounce her liquor *sheer*, when the despotic D——s issued out orders for *quarantine*. Lady F—— therefore was suffered to be her own physician, and after generally removing the disorder from her corporeal frame, transferred its violence, *individually*, to her tongue. The organs of utterance were now extraordinarily affected, insomuch that they had proceeded on their office some time before there could be found any distinction of *sharps*, *flats*, or *naturals*. When the inharmonious distributions of the several jarring sounds were tolerably arranged, her Ladyship, like a band in full chorus, gave a licentious loose to the extravagances of her anger.

LADY F——.

“ My Ladies,

“ Am I not called hither to sit in judgment? Am I not summoned as a Peereſs of the realm? Am I not qualified in every particular to hold a seat in this assembly? And will ye suffer me to be insulted? To be affronted with indignity? Thus publicly  
“ affronted?



“ affronted? Shall Peereſſes, who have nothing in the world to  
 “ recommend them but their impudence, Peereſſes, whom all the  
 “ world has pointed at, Peereſſes, who have long been deſtitute of  
 “ delicacy, and honor, dare to calumniate me with ſcurrility?—with  
 “ insolence?—with blaſphemy? I ſcorn the inſult. I would have  
 “ you know, my Lady P—f—t, and you, ye tools of an ambitious  
 “ woman, that I have a rectitude of ſoul within me, which will  
 “ ſtand the teſt of all your machinations. Think ye, that I ſhall  
 “ crouch beneath the uſurpation of a factious *traitreſs*? That I  
 “ ſhall turn a cat’s paw of the B—d party? No, I abhor the  
 “ thought. Let ſervile ſycophants court ſuch alliance from ſelfiſh  
 “ principles. Let them enſnare their children in the flaviſh union,  
 “ I will have none of it. I have *no children*. So let the noble La-  
 “ dies well conſider, nor let the *very honorable* Peereſſes, that ſwore  
 “ at me laſt, think I recall my words; I repeat it for her farther in-  
 “ formation, Had the noble Ladies been common bunters, I could  
 “ forgive the injury. Such a ſtile of reaſoning were then to be ex-  
 “ pected, but to be interrupted with *D—n me*, from a D—, and  
 “ *B—ſt you* from a V—, is a declaration of hoſtilities, which  
 “ requires no common interpreter. I ſhall therefore give it as my  
 “ opinion, that my Lady P—f—t ſhould command the offending  
 “ parties to pay the cuſtomary forfeit for prophane ſwearing, and  
 “ beg pardon of the houſe for the general affront they have been  
 “ guilty of. For the indignity I have experienced myſelf, a fu-  
 “ ture occaſion will, I truſt, afford me ſatisfaction.”

D—ss DOWAGER OF B—:

The vindictive Peereſſes had hardly ſat down, when the Duchefs  
 of B— started up with looks brimfull of anger, and a front  
 that



that would have frightened any *hero* of antiquity. The *heroines* of ages past might possibly have stood the brunt of her terrific visage, though dreadful as she is fabled, Medusa was a cherub to her. After a transitory preface of the foulest aspect, the noble Dow—r broke the black and awful silence to the following effect:

“ Most Potent Senatreffes,

“ That I have d—’d the d—ty P—fs who spoke last, it is  
 “ most true; true I’ve insulted her: and by the worth of mine  
 “ *audacious* soul, I’d do it, wer’t again. But I am ruffled, and  
 “ lose the convincing authority of my arguments by the angry dress  
 “ in which I clothe them—to be calm, therefore, my Lady  
 “ P—f—t, who is this free-born daughter of independence,  
 “ this patriotic scourge of despotism, this mighty enemy to bri-  
 “ bery in office; this gallant assertress of her hereditary dignities,  
 “ this animated descendant of the intrepid Portia? I know her  
 “ not. I fear, my Ladies, you have introduced some *commoner*  
 “ amongst us. Who brought her hither? For the preservation of  
 “ order and decency, my good Ladies, if the very authoritative  
 “ Lady be a peers, tell me, which of our sisters *chaperroned* her  
 “ *here*? I would fain scrutinize the authorities on which this zeal-  
 “ ous disciple of her sect claims the prerogative of sharing in  
 “ our councils. To you, therefore, my Lady P—f—t, with all  
 “ submission, I appeal for such particulars as may prove satisfac-  
 “ tory on the occasion.”

Lady C—y’s resentment was no way inferior to the D—fs’s. It only sought for vent, and eagerly snatched the opportunity of levelling all ceremonious distinction of persons. Her Ladyship anxiously watched the close of the noble Dow—r’s appeal, and seconded it with a vehemence of oratory that would have immortalized the

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most *gouty* in the assembly. Her right honorable adversary alone was calm amidst the thunders of the enemy ; and though, from the loft she held, her Ladyship was exposed to the immoderate violence of *small shot*, the noble V—— *stood* her ground with abundant resolution.

The Lady P——f——t now interfered ; and by means of threats, prayers, and medley arguments effected a truce, which her interposition only could accomplish. The parties at variance gradually modulated their loud strains to unintelligible murmurings, and lowered the lofty pitch of *reprobate* controversy to the simple *keys* of slanderous whispers. The *peace-making* Baroness took this opportunity to remind the house of the purpose of their summons to parliament ; and expressed a wish to take the sense of that noble assembly on the propriety or impropriety of giving sanction to the Bill for preventing Adultery : the right noble Peers declared herself for an immediate division, as the illustrious members of the senate had considered every argument which might make *for* or *against* the matter in question. Her Ladyship proceeded to recommend unanimity as the surest basis of their uninterrupted existence as a parl——t, and advised them, individually, to act up to the tenets they had hitherto professed. Should an universal assent, either to the approbation or exclusion of the bill, be inadmissible, by reason of a difference in opinion, the worthy Speaker brought them to forego all private considerations, and direct their conduct solely with a view to benefit their country. While their Ladyships acted on such principles, the *quondam* M——s assured them of the indubitable efficacy of their counsels, and the final success of their most sanguine undertakings.

LADY



LADY G——.

Lady G—— C——s Dow. of D—— begged the Lady P——t to consider the precedence due to her, and those of her very honorable compeeresses, who were so by virtue of limitation to themselves, independently of the honor they might have acquired by marriage; and observed that it would be no derogation from the rank of the espoused wives of English Peers, to suffer the said Peeresses to divide separately on the motion before them.

R—L H——ss the D——ss of G——R.

The D——s of A——ll very strenuously supported the proposition, and spoke largely on the propriety of such a distinction, but was opposed with equal warmth by her R—l H——s the D—— of G——, who condemned the unprecedented latitude of so impolitic an act. The puissant Princess considered such hereditary dignities as authoritative in their concerns with female descent, and general succession, but maintained the illegality of listening to such claims in an assembly where the *wives* of English Peers were, from the tenor of the summons, called together for the purpose of preserving their privileges *in matrimony*. Her R—l H——s expressed an intention of moving for an exclusion of such *Peereesses* as should not, at the same time, be the actual wives or dowagers of English Peers, but as their number was inconsiderable, her H——s should not interrupt their Ladyships with a proposal of the kind.

The Lady P——t counselled Lady G—— to withdraw her claim; and perceiving no farther continuance of debate from either party, proceeded to read the bill, as an introduction to the sentence, which the majority were to determine.

On calculating the number of hands in favour of the motion, the tellers reported the sum total not to exceed *fifteen*. The dissentient  
voices



voices were far more numerous. After a deliberate and cautious notation, one hundred and six were found staunch advocates for throwing out the bill. It was observed, that all the dowagers and twice espoused were unanimous in putting a negative on the B—p's good intentions. Had there been any degree of moderation among them, his Lordship's partizans might have had a shew of victory. It is supposed they had long forsaken it as a lost cause. Were it not so, the glaring inequality of the combatants will effectually prevent the minority from risking a second pitched battle in defence of conjugal chastity. No reinforcements being expected, the vanquished party had only one step to take, and that, rather in defence of the cause they supported, than in defiance of the enemy.

Those of their Ladyships who had professed obedience to K—and P—l—t, abhorring illegal independence, and scorning neutrality, voted that the following protest should be entered in the Journals of the House, and left it signed on the table for that purpose :

1. *Dissentient.* “ That we think it unconstitutional, and in  
“ the highest degree illegal, for any Peerefs individually, or any  
“ assembly of Peereffes collectively, to oppose, or in any ways  
“ prevent, or assist in preventing the execution of such laws  
“ as the three estates of this kingdom shall have authorized  
“ and enforced.

2. *Dissentient.* “ That those of their Ladyships who have  
“ put a negative on the B—p of L—'s motion, are enemies  
“ to the happiness of this country, and traitresses to the British  
“ government.

3. *Dissentient.* “ That conjugal fidelity is one great means  
“ for the preservation of domestic tranquillity, and for the pro-  
“ motion of general felicity, wherefore the opposers of the  
bill



“ bill are avowed enemies to their own honor and the welfare of  
“ their husbands.

“ AB—D—N,	H—TF—D,	P——Y,
“ B——F——T,	LE———R,	R——ND,
“ D———TH,	L—L—N,	RU——D,
“ D—SH—RE,	M—CH—R,	SP——R.”

The noble Ladies, who composed so *insignificant* a minority, were scarcely known to have quitted the assembly, on their taking leave of the council-room. The rebel army had so evident a superiority from the harmony which universally prevailed, that nothing now remained but to hoist a flag of victory, and direct their whole artillery against the L—ds and C—ns. Good-will and resolution, the two most prevailing articles in an account of that nature, were by no means deficient. Each Peerefs, individually, appeared eager for the onset; *the charge* had been long *prepared*, and all were anxious for the successful *commission* of their respective *bullets*. While matters remained in this situation, and a general buz of approbation ran through the assembly, Lady D—, in a tone somewhat above the *murmuring pitch*, begged leave to silence the honorable whisperers, for the purpose of listening to her Ladyship's introductory plan of hostile operations, previous to the indiscriminate carnage of *battle royal*. The Lady P—f—t enforcing the proposition, and *Taisez-vous*\* being repeatedly proclaimed by Mrs. —, common cryer, the noble C—fs delivered her sentiments as follows :

\* It was thought necessary by the Lady President, and many of the *privy-council*, that the Gallic forms of speech should be preserved by the official attendants on the house, but that they might be somewhat modernized, *oyez* was *nem. con.* excluded for the more familiar mode of expression referred to by this note.



LADY D—Y.

“ My LADIES,

“ It is almost needless for me to represent to your Ladyships, how  
 “ successfully our manœuvres have hitherto been conducted, and  
 “ how impotent has been the opposition formed to their overthrow.  
 “ I remind the noble authoress of counsels so politic of their con-  
 “ firmed efficacy, solely with a view to establish the purposes for  
 “ which they have been planned, and to the attainment of which  
 “ they are ultimately directed. The Bill for preventing Adultery is  
 “ still in being, though annulled among ourselves; and its influ-  
 “ ence is of such a nature, that we may be the victims of its venge-  
 “ ance, without the privilege of putting a single *nay* on the scan-  
 “ dalous enormities it professes. For the further demolition of so  
 “ threatening an edifice, I recommend therefore to your Ladyships  
 “ the exercise of every instrument which may conveniently forward  
 “ the purpose of a siege, and for more effectually intimidating the  
 “ garrison; I would at the same time propose an immediate seizure  
 “ of their right reverend leader. This cannot be considered but as a  
 “ stroke of the soundest policy; for though it may be said, that the  
 “ enemy will instantly proceed on the *offensive*, our frequent change  
 “ of residence will nevertheless be a sufficient security to ourselves,  
 “ and an absolute prevention of such lawless plunders as they may  
 “ have determined to exercise. I foresee no sort of difficulty in the  
 “ intended attack on his Lordship’s spiritual person. The exe-  
 “ cution also of such a commencement of hostilities may be, as your  
 “ Ladyships prefer, covert or open. I pawn *my honor* for the success  
 “ of either undertaking. The only matter of dispute will be, what  
 “ treatment the honorable Prelate should experience under our jealous  
 “ government; and to this effect, many of your Ladyships will, I dare  
 “ assert, have a variety of proposals to make, *a propos* to the subject



“ of his Lordship's offence. When I hint *my* favorite scheme of  
 “ vengeance, I would not be thought to have adopted it in preference  
 “ to any superior piece of mischief your Ladyships may have ex-  
 “ clusively conceived. I only introduce it as a simple speaker, and  
 “ shall be happy to abide by any other scandalous determination  
 “ the house shall be pleased to approve. I am not sufficiently read  
 “ in romance to recollect whether Don Quixote, or his squire  
 “ Sancho, was tossed in a blanket for the joint diversion of the  
 “ *actresses* in that very commendable diversion; nor is it of material  
 “ consequence to give precedency to the knight or his gentleman  
 “ on so unmartial an occasion. The Bishop of L—— may be con-  
 “ sidered for his heroism as the master, but for his confined pro-  
 “ verbial policy as the servant, and in either shape heartily me-  
 “ rits a similar elevation. When we have secured this mighty re-  
 “ former of *womankind*, and your Ladyships know he has but some  
 “ antiquated cardinal virtues to defend him, I would make a mo-  
 “ tion for ten of our stoutest members to provide a blanket suited  
 “ to the purpose, and honour the virtuous B——ton with a loftier  
 “ promotion than any of his predecessors had been able to com-  
 “ pass. If, after a treble repetition of this dose, the worthy P——te  
 “ does penance at the feet of my Lady P——t, in sincere and  
 “ woeful contrition, your Ladyships may, I think, in conformity  
 “ to your *known benevolence*, suffer the battered D——l to return  
 “ to his bench without *severer* molestation.”

Shouts of applause pervaded the senate universally, and tokens of  
 approbation were elevated on every side. Moderate *attention* having  
 again resumed *her seat*, the Lady P——t appointed Lady F——th,  
 the Dowager Lady Har——n, Lady P——t, Lady T——t, Lady  
 Co——y, Lady C——y, and the D——s Dowager of B——d, as the  
 only very able hands for executing the above admirable office. The

D——s



D—fs of P—d was thought sufficiently well-bodied for the purpose, but begged to be excused the indignity of tossing in company with Lady F—th.

Lord P—th, Lord N—n, and Lord S—s, were therefore voted as excellently cut out for such service; and as they had never approved themselves very troublesome fellows, either in the service of ministry or opposition, the noble P—rs were considered as peculiarly *built* for the present occasion. The Lady P—t therefore deputed *embassadresses* for the purpose of taking measure of the above L—ds, that each might be quite at his ease in the female accoutrements necessary to their disguise. The report of their embassy was deferred till the next day of session.

All usual ceremonies being adjusted, the right honourable Lady C—s declared the Act for preventing Adultery of none effect; and the house, after praying for the inefficacy of all such obstacles, adjourned till the morrow.

F I N I S.





